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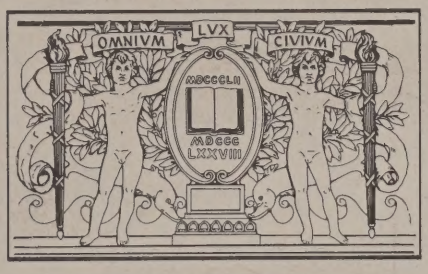

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ERT T. KENNEY
ECTOR
TON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

STATEMENT.....JUNE 6, 1974

Liberty and progressive reform have always been the hallmarks of our city.

Where better to discard outmoded city planning ideas on adult entertainment than at a site where liberty began.

Within a year or so, the term "Combat Zone" will be a thing of the past in Boston.

We are not going to try and stamp it out. That approach is outmoded. Nor are we going to foster illegal activities.

We are merely announcing today a program to change the physical appearance of the area and also to prevent the spread of these undesirable uses to other residential and commercial areas where they might be a blighting influence. The law enforcement agencies are responsible for control. We are responsible only for the physical appearance and economic well being.

We will launch a program of physical improvements that will rejuvenate this area. We are confident our actions will result in a new image for this part of downtown.

In six weeks, we will begin construction of Liberty Tree Park, at the corner of Boylston and Essex Streets, near where the Liberty Tree once stood.

That project will usher in a new era for the lower Washington Street area. This first step in our revitalization program signals a turnaround for the entertainment district.

Construction of this park should give everyone the chance once and for all to throw the words "Combat Zone" in the trash heap. We suggest that a new name for the area be "Liberty Tree." There might be others. The one point we want to emphasize is that the words "Combat Zone" are also unfair to the many legitimate businesses residing there. It is also safer than some other sections of the city.

All support the effort to convey more accurately just how much potential exists for Liberty Tree to be a vital and lively part of downtown. The vast majority of the businesses are vibrant legitimate businesses.

All agree that any program to "eliminate" the adult entertainment uses from the area where they are already located would only end up with those uses cropping up in other residential or commercial areas of the city, namely the Back Bay.

There is a basic strength in this area. Here one finds the legitimate theatres, such as the Colonial, Shubert, Wilbur and Charles Playhouse. There are fine restaurants. There are numerous cocktail lounges, the majority of which are not trouble spots in any sense of the word.

The BRA is not the Watch and Ward Society. We do not want to be arbiters of taste. We are a planning agency and we are responsible for protecting the city's long-term physical and economic well-being. We are concerned with the

exterior appearance of a district; law enforcement agencies must control what goes on inside the buildings.

We must deal with the world as it is and our recommendations reflect realities in public taste as they exist. We have an obligation--which we intend to fulfill--for making the area more attractive for the legitimate businesses which are located there. We want residents and visitors to the city to enjoy visiting Liberty Tree.

Liberty Tree, we think, will eventually be considered in the same light as Piccadilly Circus and Soho in London, Tivoli in Copenhagen or North Beach in San Francisco. In all these areas people can find the kind of entertainment they want.

We are recommending that a zoning amendment be implemented to create an Adult Entertainment Zone in the downtown.

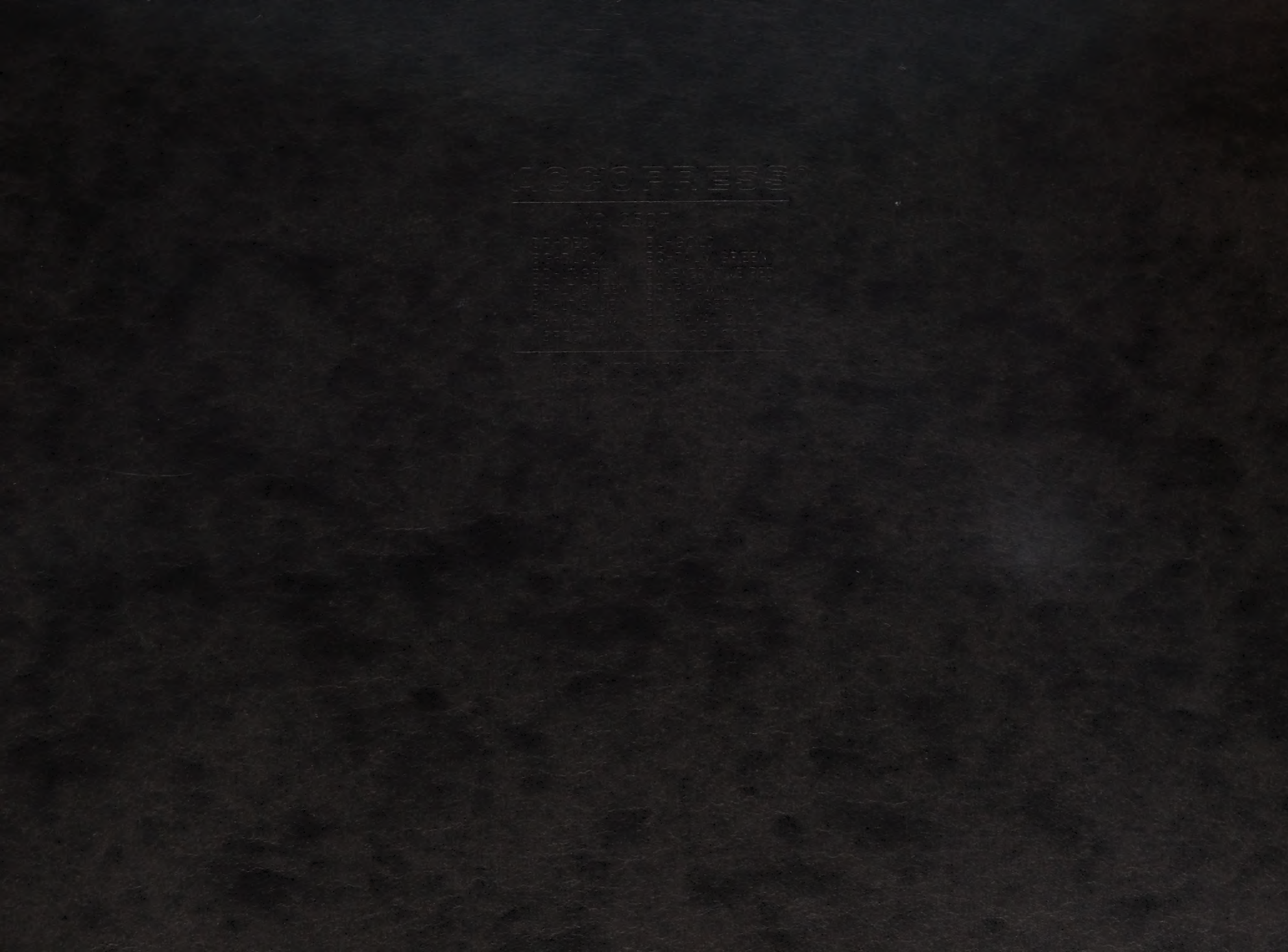
At the same time, we will make these uses forbidden in other parts of downtown. The strategy is to contain, by zoning, adult entertainment to an area where it is now located.

On Tremont and Stuart Streets we will construct a Theatre Square Park. The park's design will reflect its proximity to Boston's legitimate theatres. Demolition of buildings now on that site will begin next week.

We are carrying on discussions with businesses in the area to improve their signage and to clean the facades of their buildings.

There will be an alley clean up.

New lights and sidewalk repairs will be made in the near future.

We will have a shuttle bus service which ties together the parking facilities, entertainment enterprises, MBTA stops and the Boston Center for the Arts in the South End.

The approval of Park Plaza and other development projects in the planning stage for downtown have set the stage for this realistic program that will rejuvenate this area.